

# Journal of The Barnes Foundation

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THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM  
of  
THE BARNES FOUNDATION

*comprises:*

1. Three separate courses at the University of Pennsylvania, viz.: (a) Modern Art; (b) Research in Plastic Art, conducted by Thomas Munro, Ph.D.; (c) The Aesthetic Experience, conducted by Laurence Buermeyer, Ph.D.
2. A course entitled "Applied Aesthetics" at Columbia University, New York City, conducted by Thomas Munro, Ph.D.

All the above courses may be elected for credit toward various degrees, graduate and undergraduate.

3. Seminars, lectures, demonstrations and classes for teachers of art, painters, writers and non-professional people, conducted in the Foundation Buildings by Albert C. Barnes, Laurence Buermeyer, Thomas Munro and Mary Mullen.

4. The Foundation's publications:

**An Approach to Art . . .** By Mary Mullen  
**The Aesthetic Experience .** By Laurence Buermeyer  
**The Art in Painting . . .** By Albert C. Barnes

are in use in over sixty American universities and colleges, and in the public school systems of numerous important cities. These books are used also as text and standard works of reference in classes conducted in many important art galleries, including the Louvre, Paris, and the Metropolitan Museum, New York City.

5. Courses in the study of plastic art are conducted from July 1 to September 1 in the art galleries of Europe by our own Educational Staff.

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7. The educational staff of the Barnes Foundation renders consultation service to various universities, colleges, schools, cities and galleries in matters relating to courses in the study of plastic art.

## SUMMER COURSE IN EUROPE.

For the third consecutive year, the Barnes Foundation will conduct in the summer of 1926 a course of art appreciation in the principal galleries of France, Italy and Spain.

The course will be conducted by Dr. Thomas Munro, Barnes Foundation Professor of Modern Art at the University of Pennsylvania and Lecturer on Applied Aesthetics at Columbia University. Its program includes a first-hand daily study of all the great traditions of European painting in front of the pictures themselves. The object will be to point out the most significant plastic qualities in these pictures, and their interrelations as stages in the development of pictorial form and artistic value.

Beginning on Monday, July fifth, the course is planned to last about six weeks, and to include study of the paintings at Paris, Rome, Orvieto, Assisi, Arezzo, Florence, Siena, Venice, Madrid and Toledo.

The tuition fee is \$100, of which one-half is payable on enrollment, the balance at or before the first meeting of the class. No previous training in art is required, but since the group is necessarily limited to a small size, applicants should state their general educational qualifications.

The class will organize on July fifth at the Paris office of the Barnes Foundation, 59 rue la Boëtie. Application should be made at once to the Barnes Foundation, Merion, Montgomery Co., Pa.



Cézanne

Barnes Foundation

# JOURNAL *of* THE BARNES FOUNDATION

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## Affective Thought in Logic and Painting.

BY JOHN DEWEY.

TRADITIONAL theories in philosophy and psychology have accustomed us to sharp separations between physiological and organic processes on the one hand and the higher manifestations of culture in science and art on the other. The separations are summed up in the common division made between mind and body. These theories have also accustomed us to draw rigid separations between the logical, strictly intellectual, operations which terminate in science, the emotional and imaginative processes which dominate poetry, music and to a lesser degree the plastic arts, and the practical doings which rule our daily life and which result in industry, business and political affairs. In other words, thought, sentiment or affectivity and volition have been marked off from one another. The result of these divisions has been the creation of a large number of problems which in their technical aspect are the special concern of philosophy, but which come home to every one in his actual life in the segregation of the activities he carries on, the departmentalizing of life, the pigeon-holing of interests. Between science's sake, art for art's sake, business as usual or business for money-making, the relegation of religion to Sundays and holy-days, the turning over of politics to professional politicians, the professionalizing of sports, and so on, little room is left for living, for the sake of living, a full, rich and free life.

Recent advances in some fundamental generalizations regarding biological functions in general and those of the nervous system in particular have made possible a definite conception of continuous development from the lower functions to the higher. Interestingly enough, this breaking-down of fixed barriers between physiological operations and the far reaches of culture in science and art has also removed the underpinning from beneath the separation of science, art and practical activity

from one another. There has long been vague talk about the unity of experience and mental life, to the effect that knowledge, feeling and volition are all manifestations of the same energies, etc.; but there has now been put in our hands the means by which this talk may be made definite and significant.

Naturally, the variety of physiological details involved has not yet been adequately organized nor has there been time to digest them and get their net results. In any case, the writer is not an expert in this field, and even if he were this JOURNAL would hardly be the place to expound them. But some of their net results are easy of comprehension, and they have a definite bearing upon art and its connection with the normal processes of life.

We may begin with the field of reasoning, long supposed to be preëmpted by pure intellect, and to be completely severed, save by accident, from affectivity and desire and from the motor organs and habits by which we make our necessary practical adjustments to the world about us. But a recent writer, Rignano, working from a biological basis, has summed up his conclusions as follows: "The analysis of reasoning, the highest of our mental faculties, has led us to the view that it is constituted entirely by the reciprocal play of the two fundamental and primordial activities of our psyche, the intellectual and the affective. The first consist in simple mnemonic evocations of perceptions or images of the past; the second appear as tendencies or aspirations of our mind towards a certain end to be attained, towards which reasoning itself is directed."\*

An isolated quotation fails, of course, to bring out the full force of the points made. But what is summed up here under the idea of "affectivity" is that an organism has certain basic needs which cannot be supplied without activity which modifies the surroundings; that when the organism is in any way disturbed in its "equilibration" with its environment, its needs show themselves as restless, craving, desiring activity which persists until the acts thus induced have brought about a new integration of the organism and its relation to the environment. Then it is shown that thinking falls within the scope of this principle; reasoning is a phase of the generic function of bringing about a new relationship between organisms and the conditions of life, and like other phases of the function is controlled by need, desire and progressive satisfactions.

Rignano calls the other phase "intellectual." But the con-

\* Rignano, *The Psychology of Reasoning*, p. 388.

text shows that the basic principle here is one of practical adjustments. Past experiences are retained so that they may be evoked and arranged when there is need to use them in attaining the new end set by the needs of our affective nature. But the retention is not intellectual. It is a matter of organic modifications, of change of disposition, attitude and habit. The "stuff" from which thinking draws its material in satisfying need by establishing a new relation to the surroundings is found in what, with some extension of the usual sense of the word, may be termed habits: namely, the changes wrought in our ways of acting and undergoing by prior experiences. Thus the material of thought all comes from the past; but its purpose and direction is future, the development of a new environment as the condition of sustaining a new and more fully integrated self.

It thus turns out, though the argument is too technical to be developed on this occasion, that the great gap which is traditionally made between the lower physiological functions and the higher cultural ones, is due first to isolating the organism from the environment, failing to see the necessity of its integration with environment, and secondly, to neglect of the function of needs in creating ends, or consequences to be attained. So when "ends" are recognized at all, it has been thought necessary to call in some higher and independent power to account for them. But the connection of ends with affectivities, with cravings and desires, is deep-seated in the organism, and is constantly extended and refined through experience. Desire, interest, accomplishes what in the traditional theory a pure intellect was evoked to accomplish. More and more expansive desires and more varied and flexible habits build up more elaborate trains of thought and, finally, the harmonies, consistencies and comprehensive structures of logical systems result.

Reasoning and science are thus obviously brought nearer to art. The satisfaction of need requires that surroundings should be changed. In reasoning, this fact appears as the necessity for experimentation. In plastic art it is a common-place. Art also explicitly recognizes what it has taken so long to discover in science; the control of re-shaping natural conditions exercised by emotion, and the place of the imagination, under the influence of desire, in re-creating the world into a more orderly place. When so-called nonrational factors are found to play a large part in the production of relations of consistency and order in logical systems, it is not surprising that they should operate in artistic structures. Indeed, it may be questioned whether any scientific systems extant, save perhaps those of mathematics,

equal artistic structure in integrity, subtlety and scope, while the latter are evidently more readily and widely understood, and are the sources of a more widespread and direct satisfaction. These facts are explicable only when it is realized that scientific and artistic systems embody the same fundamental principles of the relationship of life to its surroundings, and that both satisfy the same fundamental needs. Probably a time will come when it will be universally recognized that the differences between coherent logical schemes and artistic structures in poetry, music and the plastics are technical and specialized, rather than deep-seated.

In the past we have had to depend mostly upon phrases to explain the production of artistic structures. They have been referred to genius or inspiration or the creative imagination. Contemporary appeal to the Unconscious and the Racial Unconscious are the same thing under a new name. Writing the word with a capital letter and putting "the" before it, as if it were a distinct force, gives us no more light than we had before. Yet unconscious activities are realities, and the newer biology is making it clear that such organic activities are just of the kind to re-shape natural objects in order to procure their adequate satisfaction, and that the re-shaped object will be marked by the features known to belong to works of art.

It is a common-place that repetition in place and time, rhythm, symmetry, harmony, modulation, suspense and resolution, plot, climax and contrasting let down, emphasis and intervals, action and retardation, unity, being "all of a piece," and inexhaustible variety, are marks, in varying ways, to meet the requirements of different media, of all artistic productions. These are just the traits which naturally characterize objects when the environment is made over in consonance with basic organic requirements. On the other hand, the fact that the spectator and auditor "clicks" so intimately and intensely in the face of works of art is accounted for. By their means there are released old, deep-seated habits or engrained organic "memories," yet these old habits are deployed in new ways, ways in which they are adapted to a more completely integrated world so that they themselves achieve a new integration. Hence the liberating, expansive power of art.

The same considerations explain the fact that works of art of a new style have to create their own audience. At first there is experienced largely the jar of dissonance with the superficial habits most readily called into play. But changes in the surroundings involve correlated changes in the organism, and so

the eye and ear gradually become acclimatized. The organism is really made over, is reorganized in effecting an adequate perception of a work of art. Hence the proper effect of the latter is gradually realized, and then what was first condemned as *outré* falls into its serial place in the history of artistic achievement.

In *The Art in Painting*, Mr. Barnes has shown that plastic form is the *integration of all plastic means*. In the case of paintings, these are color, line, light and space. By means of their relations to one another, design is affected: design, namely in line patterns, in surface masses, in three-dimensional solids, and in spatial intervals—the “room” about objects whether up and down, side to side, front and back. And Mr. Barnes has shown that it is the kind and degree of integration of plastic means in achieving each of the elements of design taken by itself and also the integration of each with all the others, which constitutes the objective standard for value in painting. From the psychological standpoint, this integration in pictures means that a correlative integration is effected in the total set of organic responses; eye-activities arouse allied muscular activities which in turn not merely harmonize with and support eye activities, but which in turn evoke further experiences of light and color, and so on. Moreover, as in every adequate union of sensory and motor actions, the background of visceral, circulatory, respiratory functions is also consonantly called into action. In other words, integration in the object permits and secures a corresponding integration in organic activities. Hence, the peculiar well-being and rest in excitation, vitality in peace, which is characteristic of aesthetic enjoyment.

Defective value can, of course, be judged by the same measure. Some one of the elements may be deficient; thereby adequate support is not given to the functioning of the other elements and a corresponding lack of vitality in response occurs or even a feeling of frustration and bafflement. Or, what is more likely to happen in pictures that may conventionally attain celebrity for a time, some factor is overaccentuated—so that while vision is captured and impressed for the moment, the final reaction is partial and one-sided, a fatiguing demand being made upon some organic activities which are not duly nourished and reinforced by the others.

Thus it is not too much to say that the statement of an objective criterion of value in paintings set forth for the first time by Mr. Barnes will make possible in time an adequate psychological, even physiological, analysis of aesthetic responses

in spectators, so that the appreciation of paintings will no longer be a matter of private, absolute tastes and *ipse dixits*.

By the use of the same conception of integration of specified means, Mr. Barnes has also for the first time given us the clue to the historical development of modern painting in terms of paintings themselves. In the earlier period, integration is in considerable measure achieved by means extraneous to the painting itself, such as associated subject-matter in the religious or prior (academic) tradition, or by undue reliance upon familiar associations between light and shade and spatial positions. The history of art shows a tendency to secure variety and relationship in plastic form by means of the element most truly distinctive of painting, namely, color. Lines, for example, have ceased to be hard and fast clear-cut divisions (in which case they are more or less nonintegrative), and are determined by subtle meetings of color-masses which upon close examination are found to melt into one another. Similarly, light and shade were long employed on the basis of every-day practical associations to give the impression of solidity. But artists capable of greater differentiation and integration of their experiences in terms of color itself experimented in conveying tri-dimensional relationships by means of variations and juxtapositions in color. Then color was employed to build up structural solidity and its variations in single objects. Painters have also learned to render action and movement, not by depending upon associations with extraneous experiences—which always lead to an overaccentuation of some one feature, light or line, as in depicting exaggerated muscular poses—but by use of the relations of forms to one another, in connection with spatial intervals, this end being attained by use of color as means. The fact that this more subtle and complete integration usually involves deformation or distortion of familiar forms—that is, conflicts with associations formed outside the realm of painting—accounts for the fact that they are greeted at first with disdainful criticism. But in time a new line of organic associations is built up, formed on the basis of unalloyed aesthetic experiences, and deformations—what are such from the practical every-day standpoint—cease to give trouble and to be annoying. They become elements in a genuine and direct aesthetic grasp.

From the standpoint of the analysis of pictures, there is nothing new in these remarks to any one familiar with Mr. Barnes's book. I have recurred to them only because the objective analysis of Mr. Barnes is in the first place so thoroughly in accord with the present trend of fundamental biologi-

cal conceptions, and, secondly, because it makes possible an application of these biological conceptions to the whole field of artistic structures and aesthetic criticism. It then becomes possible to break down the traditional separation between scientific and intellectual systems and those of art, and also to further the application of the principle of integration to the relationship of those elements of culture which are so segregated in our present life—to science, art, in its variety of forms, industry and business, religion, sport and morals. And it is daily being more evident that unless some integration can be attained, the always increasing isolations and oppositions consequent upon the growth of specialization in all fields, will in the end disrupt our civilization. That art and its intelligent appreciation as manifested especially in painting is itself an integrating experience is the constant implication of the work of the Barnes Foundation as that is reflected in *The Art in Painting*. For to make of paintings an educational means is to assert that the genuine intelligent realization of pictures is not only an integration of the specialized factors found in the paintings as such, but is such a deep and abiding experience of the nature of fully harmonized experience as sets a standard or forms a habit for all other experiences. In other words, paintings when taken out of their specialized niche are the basis of an educational experience which counteracts the disrupting tendencies of the hard-and-fast specializations, compartmental divisions and rigid segregations which so confuse and nullify our present life.

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The Barnes Foundation announces that separate lectures are given by Dr. Thomas Munro, before educational institutions, societies, art clubs, etc., on the following topics:

Present Tendencies in Art (with lantern slides),  
Primitive Negro Sculpture (with lantern slides),  
Modern Methods in Art Instruction.

Arrangement for these lectures should be made by addressing The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Montgomery Co., Pa.

# The Essential Problem of Plastic Criticism.

By MARY MULLEN.

PERHAPS the most serious problem in education in art is reached after the student has learned to disregard the irrelevant narrative and sentimental issues which at the start distract him from the plastic qualities in painting. Granted an open mind, a fair degree of intelligence, a not-too-cumbersome load of interfering habits and, most important of all, native sensibility, it is not usually very difficult to make clear to the student that plastic form is a synthesis of color, line, light and space, which has an independent appeal of its own, and which is distinctively characteristic of all painting which is genuine art. That plastic form must be personal and distinctive, that it must extract the essence of a thing or situation and present it enriched by the artist's deeper and broader insight, is also comparatively easy to make comprehensible.

For those to whom the meaning of plastic form itself presents a difficulty, an illuminating analogy may be found in music. A composer builds his total form—let us say, a sonata—out of the twelve half-tones in the scale, sounded both simultaneously and successively. A certain number of these notes, arranged sequentially at definite intervals of time, form what may be called a phrase, and periodic variations of stress or accent within the phrase yield the effect of rhythm. Several phrases, united, form a melody; this is doubly rhythmic by virtue of the relationship of the phrases constituting it. Other melodies, similarly constructed, differing from the first in regard to specific contour or combination of notes, but related in general time-order, further diversify and amplify the rhythmic structure, and the combination of all these melodies, repeated with variations of all sorts, constitutes what is called a "movement." The complete sonata consists of several movements, each complete in itself, but each related to the composition as a whole. This successive integration of increasingly complex units—notes at intervals of time, forming phrases, phrases forming melodies, etc.—makes up a complete design or form, characterized by unity, variety, rhythm, a form which has a perfectly distinctive appeal to our sensibilities, one which is independent of all reference to other things or events.

Plastic form is a creation, in the realm of visual sensation,

analogous to musical form in that of auditory sensation. What the musician does with a very limited number of sounds and intervals of time the painter does with color, line, light and space. He makes a pattern of each of these elements, and relates these patterns, these units, to other units in a complex, rhythmic design. Lines are related to other lines, colors to other colors, spatial intervals to other spatial intervals, and from the interrelation of all these sub-forms emerges a totality which we call plastic form. This is aesthetically valuable in proportion as the integration, the unification, is complete, and also in proportion as it is fresh, novel, original, a distinctively personal expression of something which has universal human significance.

It is when we consider the question whether a given plastic form actually is well-unified, whether it really does represent a personal and significant experience, that the chief difficulty arises. Has the painter anything distinctive and important to say? Has he said it in good plastic terms? The ability to answer these questions is the goal of education in art, and the purpose of the present discussion is to indicate the method by which answers to them may be found.

The question whether a painter has anything distinctive to say can be answered only by one who is familiar with the traditions of art. A Sebastian del Piombo might seem impressive to anyone who had never seen a Titian; a Vlaminck, to one ignorant of the work of Cézanne. Guido Reni was a painter whose work, viewed apart from that of his predecessors, seems highly skilled and usually well-balanced, but his artistic stature is negligible because he did no more than reshuffle the *clichés* bequeathed him by the earlier painters of the Renaissance. Whether a painter is imitative, repetitive, academic, can only be determined by one who knows the traditions of painting and can recognize them beneath the disguises afforded by varying subject-matter. The ability to identify characteristics as they appear variously disguised is partly a matter of native sensitivity, and where this is lacking, education is impossible; what education can do, however, is to provide for those natively qualified an understanding of the essentials of the great traditions, which are the common stock in trade of all pictorial artists. Without this, the most acute observer can do little or nothing: unless, for example, he knows Manet, he cannot see the essential plastic banality of Sargent and Henri.

Over and above such knowledge of traditions, the observer must have a background of experience of the world itself, a wide and deep acquaintance with things as they actually exist. It is

only such a background that will enable him to recognize the importance or triviality of what the painter has to say, his grasp of universal human values. Such a background, however, depends upon personal endowment and general education, and the cultivation of it is something apart from specific education in plastic art.

The next problem is that of successful integration of the plastic means. It is suggested by the fact that in such great artists as Titian, El Greco, Rembrandt, Renoir and Cézanne, though integration is uniformly successful, it is effected in very different ways. In no two of these artists are the individual elements, color, line, light and space, used with the same degree of emphasis. The brilliance of Titian's or Renoir's color is lacking in Rembrandt; Titian and Renoir cannot compare in richness and variety of linear forms with El Greco; Cézanne uses color to give an effect of weight and mass far more convincingly than any of the others; Rembrandt, with only a few dark colors enriched and set off by striking contrasts in illumination, builds color-forms of unique moving power. What constitutes integration of the plastic means is therefore a problem of vital importance, if we are to separate alleged works of art into authentic creations and mere exploits of virtuosity, and to discriminate between the degrees of greatness in creation. This is the most difficult problem for the student who has passed beyond the A B C of education in plastic art.

Integration means that all the factors which enter into plastic form have been balanced, that they unify. If the painter has used any one of the plastic means to such an extent that it distracts us from our perception of the painting as a whole, if isolated effects absorb our attention, the result is virtuosity. This is what constitutes overaccentuation of means: it is the competition of one of the plastic elements with the others, instead of its merging with them. For example, the elaborate linear rhythms and arabesques in Botticelli's work have established his reputation as a great draughtsman, but when we compare his drawing with Renoir's we find the latter more powerful, because the line is merged with color and light to form a new plastic unit more truly expressive than the isolated linear pattern of Botticelli. Monet, with more numerous and more brilliant colors than Rembrandt, achieves a lesser effect of actual color-power and consequently a less convincing total design. The converse is equally obvious. Overaccentuation of any one of the plastic elements involves the slighting of one or more of the other elements. Botticelli was deficient in color, Monet's command

over line and space was inferior to his ability to relate bright colors harmoniously.

In all these instances of inadequate or unequal command of the plastic means, the aesthetic inferiority of the painting results from the effect of deficient reality. It is to be explained by Santayana's dictum, that what is unreal is uninteresting. Although a painter may choose to emphasize one aspect of a situation, the emphasis does not become overemphasis, melodrama, if the other aspects are indicated in a degree sufficient to carry conviction. If, however, the accentuation of light, or line or color, is such as to submerge the other qualities which every concrete thing possesses, then reality is lost, and aesthetic significance with it; on the other hand, comparatively slight intimations of a quality (such as Giotto's unrealistic and rather rudimentary perspective) may suffice to preserve the sense of reality. In the remainder of this discussion we shall present examples of such attainment of reality, of plastic conviction, in spite of the accentuation of various plastic elements.

There is, of course, no rule, fixed and final, by which we can determine the degree to which variety and brilliance of color, elaboration of grouping, rhythm of line, etc., must be present, or by which we can condemn a picture in which the use of any of these factors falls below a specified point. The following examples are not intended to lay the foundation of any such law, but to guide observation, to aid in the acquisition of that experience in looking at many different kinds of painting which is the *sine qua non* of any competent judgment of plastic integration.

"Colorists such as Rubens and Renoir cannot be accused of overaccentuation, because they realized other aspects of the world in plastic terms equally strong, so that it is clear that they did not conceive *exclusively* in terms of color. In the work of both these painters we see significant line, movement, composition, effective spacing both on the surface and in the third dimension. Color serves not as the only source of effect, but as an organizing principle. Renoir's drawing, for example, is done in terms of color, and though the incisive line characteristic of Raphael or Leonardo is absent, the effects to which line contributes—movement, fluidity, rhythm—are rendered with great success. Although the kind and degree of solidity which we find in Leonardo, Michel Angelo and Cézanne is absent in Renoir's masses, they do not seem vaporous or unreal. They have substance, weight, actuality, though not in the same

manner and degree as do the masses in the work of painters whose primary purpose was different.

"The way in which emphasis of one of the plastic means may be united with subsidiary but sufficient realization of the others is further illustrated in Rembrandt. Chiaroscuro, a bright area of light surrounded by heavy shadow, serves as the point of departure in all his pictures. He avoids overemphasis of this special means by making the tones used in connection with light function as color more powerfully than any bright colors in Leonardo or Raphael. In the portraits of 'Hendrickje Stoffels' (in the Louvre) and of the 'Old Man' (in the Uffizi), minute variations in the golden-brown light give a richer, more glowing and actually more varied effect than all the colors of the spectrum when used by a lesser artist. When, as in 'The Unmerciful Servant' (Wallace Collection), he introduces bright color, the effect is one of marvelous depth, richness and fire. This same combination of economy of means and great effectiveness may be found also in his line and composition. In space-composition, for example, the use of chiaroscuro narrowly circumscribes the amount of space at the painter's disposal, yet in 'The Unmerciful Servant' the effect of roominess achieved is comparable to the fine spatial effects of Perugino or Raphael."\*

In the greatest artists, we find a fully competent and convincing use of *all* the plastic means. There may, however, be very genuine and moving art in which the painter, though his command of the plastic means is unequal and his grasp of human values is restricted, still has a genuinely personal vision which he expresses in terms of the best traditions. Lancret, Canaletto, Puvis de Chavannes and Van Gogh belong to this rank, as do, among more modern men, Rousseau le Douanier, Modigliani, Chirico and Soutine. An analysis of their work will illustrate both the employment of the traditions and the contribution of something original and distinctive, in plastic form which is balanced and convincing even though it does not belong to art of the highest order.

Rousseau has no obvious affinity to any of the great traditions. Yet the essentials of the traditions, especially of the Florentine, are to be found in his work. His apparent deficiency is in color; his color is conventional in quality, limited in range, not rich or deep, and comparatively lacking in structural function. His *forte* lay in his very great command of space, both in the skilful handling of small but very well-defined intervals, and in the contrast

\* Albert C. Barnes, *The Art in Painting*, pp. 92, 93.

of such intervals with large-scale effects reminiscent of Perugino and Raphael, Claude Lorrain and Poussin. To this he added a supreme mastery of light, a line which, though it has none of the terseness and psychological expressiveness of Goya's, Daumier's or Degas's, serves admirably to heighten the spatial effects, and finally, a set of distortions which render a charming effect of childlike *naiveté*. These qualities, taken together, enable him to do with his limited gamut of color what no other artist, except Rembrandt and Velasquez, ever did.

The traditions which we see in Modigliani are those of Cézanne as regards color, the Florentines as regards line, and negro sculpture as regards construction of the masses. All these are used in a quite personal and distinctive manner, and, as with Rousseau, they compensate for a relative absence of other plastic qualities. There is little use of deep space, but this is not demanded by his designs. There is scarcely any portrayal of character or interpretation of personality, as in Goya, Rembrandt or Titian, and substantially none of the elevation, the mystical quality, which we find in Claude Lorrain or Giotto. However, Modigliani does not attempt subjects which would require such gifts: the means he does use, he uses with a fine adaptation of traditions to his individual purpose. He has caught the qualities of negro sculpture which lend themselves to reproduction in paint, the interesting rhythmic distortions, without attempting to copy the structural solidity; in the interest of his relatively two-dimensional design he has also abandoned Cézanne's deeply structural effects in color. Yet his use of color does not lack conviction, because the color is so skilfully merged with the incisive Florentine line, very effective in itself, that the two elements are felt, not in isolation, but as the parts of a single plastic unit. His form does not hold the wealth of human qualities which we find in Renoir's or Giorgione's, but its slighter, more nearly decorative value, is enhanced by the beauty of the paint itself, in the manner of Velasquez, Chardin, Constable, Corot and Manet. Modigliani extracted from each of the traditions what was serviceable for the creation of a light, delicate, charming and very well-integrated form.

The range of Chirico's effects is also quite limited, as compared with Renoir's, and he too lacks Renoir's monumental command of all the resources of painting. His color is not bright or varied, and its structural function is slight. His designs are chiefly founded on space, and of this he is a great master. The vivid impression of real depth lends conviction to masses the modelling of which, considered in isolation, is lacking in realism. His

composition is largely effected through the use of massive architectural features, which suggest Masaccio and Giotto; the linear aspects of these masses are strongly emphasized, and their angular character shows an effective adaptation of cubistic principles. In the exotic quality of his color, he recalls El Greco, whom he resembles also in the highly mystical quality of his form as a whole. His work represents, in other words, a judicious selection and thorough-going reorganization of all the elements in the traditions which are adapted to his chosen theme of mysticism. Rich color-chords such as Renoir's, a realistic treatment of light comparable to the impressionists', massiveness and weight like Cézanne's or Michel Angelo's, dramatic movement such as Tintoretto's or Rubens's—any or all of these would have been a positive detriment to his individual form. It is a tribute to his intelligence that he could recognize his limitations and not attempt designs for which he lacks the necessary resources.

Unlike Rousseau, Modigliani and Chirico, Soutine is primarily a colorist, but like them he uses the plastic means which for him are secondary, in a degree ample to secure plastic reality. The basis of his form is a succession of deep, rich, vivid, glowing, highly rhythmic and dynamic colors, applied often in the manner of Van Gogh. Light and modelling as we see them in Leonardo, line as in Raphael, space as in Poussin, are almost entirely absent in his work. But in spite of the exaggerated, almost fantastic novelty of his pictures, we see upon analysis that there is real continuity with the great traditions of painting, especially with the Venetian. The use of a distorted mass of color to serve as line and mass represents a personal adaptation of the manner of Cézanne and Daumier. Line and space, so far as possible, are rendered in terms of color, in a manner which carries further what we already find in Renoir. The strange and exotic quality of negro sculpture, its simplification and rhythm, are given a very striking equivalent in terms of color. The total effect, that of intense movement, power, drama, passion, goes back to Tintoretto, but Soutine's rendering of it is completely individual, and it represents a very successful adaptation of the plastic resources which the centuries since Tintoretto have made available to painting. We thus have in him something personal and distinctive, given in terms of the traditions, and realized in a form in which color is primary, but which is made convincing by adequate reinforcement through line, light and space.

We may recapitulate this discussion as follows. Plastic form, as we find it in great art, is a successful merging of all the plastic means to give a personal and convincing version of some expe-

rience embodying universal human values. The greatest artists are those in whom there is the fullest command of all the means, and in whom the grasp of human values is broadest and deepest. But there may also be art of high value in forms which represent a more limited experience of human values and a relative deficiency in one or more of the plastic means. This is possible if the painter does not attempt designs to which his gifts are unequal, and if, along with primary emphasis on a particular element or elements, there is employment of the residual elements in a degree sufficient to achieve plastic reality.

The net result of the foregoing for education is as follows: The conception of plastic form, plus a grasp of what is essential and vital in the traditions of painting, provide the student or observer with a method for placing a new painter in the traditions and putting a value upon his aesthetic achievement. It is only through the use of such a method that judgment can be intelligent, that is, unbiased by prestige or by casual and personal preference. For the observer in analyzing the ground of a painter's appeal, as for the painter in selecting and reworking the means which tradition has put at his disposal, intelligence is essential, and without method there can be no intelligence.

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## Paul Guillaume.

THE publication this spring of the book entitled *Primitive Negro Sculpture*, by Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro, calls for a word on the man, Paul Guillaume, who rescued this obscure ancient African art from its mere ethnological significance, and converted it into a well of unsuspected spiritual richness from which the whole modern movement in art has drunk deeply. His little gallery in Paris of Negro Sculpture and Contemporary Painting is the mecca of the important artistic creators not only of France, but of America, Japan, England and other countries. As Editor of *Les Arts à Paris*, M. Guillaume has become internationally known to artists, collectors and writers as a distinguished authority on contemporary movements. As Foreign Secretary of the Barnes Foundation, he has been a vital aid in furthering in Europe the educational program of the Foundation. The discussion of that program in *Les Arts à Paris* has attracted wide interest and is largely reflected in the articles, more than a score in number, which the leading European journals of art and education have devoted to the Barnes Foundation.

# The Evolution of Contemporary Painting.\*

BY ALBERT C. BARNES.

THE distinctive note in the painting of our own day is the development of interest in design as something comparatively independent of the ostensible subject of the painting. Almost all modern painting shows the influence of impressionism, especially as that movement was shaped and brought to its consummation by Renoir and Cézanne. In the work of both of these artists, the interest in achieving design primarily through the medium of color is paramount, but the interest in color takes a different form in the two men. Renoir's color is more varied, brighter, more sensuously charming and more decorative. In Cézanne it is more restrained and is used more in the interest of solidity or mass. But in both artists it assumes throughout the canvas a functional power to effect composition in a degree unequaled in the history of painting. The emphasis of color as the most potent of all the instruments of design is thus due to the researches of these two men.

In the evolution of their techniques, Renoir and Cézanne adopted methods that came from the Venetians, Velasquez, Hals, Rubens, Goya, Delacroix and Courbet, through Manet's simplifications and generalizations. These latter were achieved principally by the broad brush-strokes that enabled Manet to give the essential quality of things, stripped of adventitious matter, and in a form that added a new note to general design. The concentration on the essential visible reality, which was the distinctive contribution of Velasquez, was thus revived and made a part of the living tradition of the time. It still further assisted in the work of making an independent non-naturalistic design, which should also reveal penetratingly the nature of things. Manet's method of using his brush had comparatively little direct influence upon Renoir and Cézanne, but Manet's contribution as a whole was in solution in most of the painting of the time, and it constantly reappears in the work of subsequent painters. With Renoir and Cézanne, impressionistic painting constituted the point of departure. In them, impressionism was further fertilized by all the great traditions of the past, and, taken together, they represent the highest develop-

\* Abridged from *The Art in Painting*, by Albert C. Barnes.

ment of plastic form. Simplification and distortion are more obvious in Cézanne's work than in Renoir's, and this fact has led to the erroneous view, at present much in vogue among superficial critics, that Cézanne represents a stage further in advance than Renoir in the progress toward the goal of a pure art.

The art of painting as it emerges from the hands of Renoir and Cézanne has in its possession as never before two all-important principles. First, the principle of pure design, embodying the values of human experience but not tied down to a literal reproduction of the situations in which these values are found in ordinary life. Second, the principle of color as the most essential of all the plastic elements, the means almost entirely intrinsic to the medium of paint. This latter principle means, pragmatically, that effects of mass, composition, space, drawing, are most moving aesthetically when rendered in terms of color. Upon this foundation rests all that is truly significant and important in contemporary art.

Factors contributing to the development of modern design are found also in the work of Gauguin and Van Gogh. Other very important sources of inspiration are negro sculpture, in the case of Picasso, Modigliani and Soutine; and the art of Persia, India, China and Japan, in the case of Matisse and his disciples.

In Gauguin there reappear the broad areas of color which are to be found in Manet, but with a different effect. The areas are broader, more purely decorative and do not show Manet's characteristic modification by perceptible brush-work. In Manet the design is intended much more to render the essential natural quality of what is depicted, while in Gauguin the forms are less expressive and they function more obviously as means to a design which is much more nearly mere pattern. This undoubtedly makes Gauguin a less important artist, but it also made his pictures fertile in suggestions for the painters who followed him. In Gauguin's general exotic quality and in his unusual color-contrasts, there is an anticipation of the color-scheme which was later used with more subtlety, variety and power by Matisse.

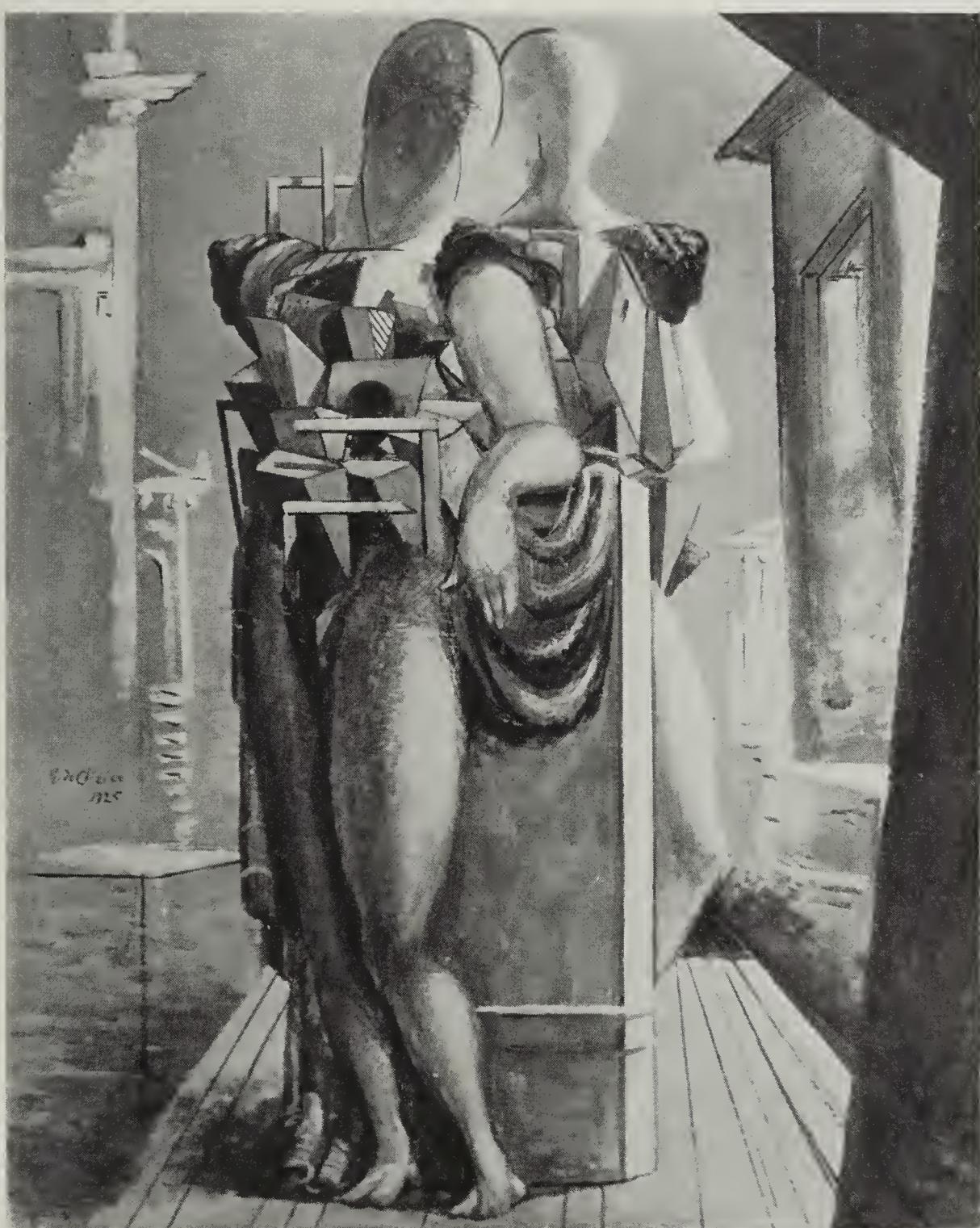
In Van Gogh, we see the exaggeration of the color-division of the impressionists into long, narrow, ribbon-like streaks of color which give a general animation to the canvas and brightness to the color itself, in addition to making a specific design in which line and color fuse. In this respect, Van Gogh's painting is more expressive, less merely decorative, than Gauguin's; but a similar step is taken towards the isolation of design, and the decorative motive is also present. The strikingly unnatural shades of color

and the distortions of line and mass are steps in the same direction, and these, together with the other characteristics of Van Gogh's painting, have been utilized freely by contemporary painters.

Negro sculpture has enriched contemporary painting to such an extent that a brief discussion of it is necessary. In the early periods of Greek sculpture figures were conceived as combinations of back, front and side bas-reliefs. The achievement of complete plastic freedom was a late exploit, which arrived after the great period of Greek sculpture had passed. It was at all times complicated by the motive of representation, so that the arrangement of masses, of head, trunk and limbs, which would have made the most effective plastic ensemble, was rarely found. Literature, in other words, stood in the way of plastic form. With negro sculpture, the literary motive was absent and the artist strove to distribute his masses in accord with the requirements of a truly sculptural design. There is no suggestion of the bas-relief: the figures are three-dimensional through and through. Its freedom from anything adventitious or meaningless gives negro art a sculptural quality purer than that of the best Greek periods and also of Renaissance sculpture, which is Greek in a modern guise. In this respect, negro sculpture is quite the equal of Egyptian sculpture of the best periods.

Greek statues have had an enormous influence on the whole history of painting since the Renaissance, and the pictures in which this influence is most apparent, for example, those of Leonardo, represent in a double sense a mongrel art. They are imitations in painting of another art, and this other art is in itself hybrid, a cross between pure sculpture and flat representation. Hence the confusion of values in Leonardo and all who showed the influence of his example. This confusion was not incompatible with considerable achievement, but it has unduly limited the range of possible plastic effects.

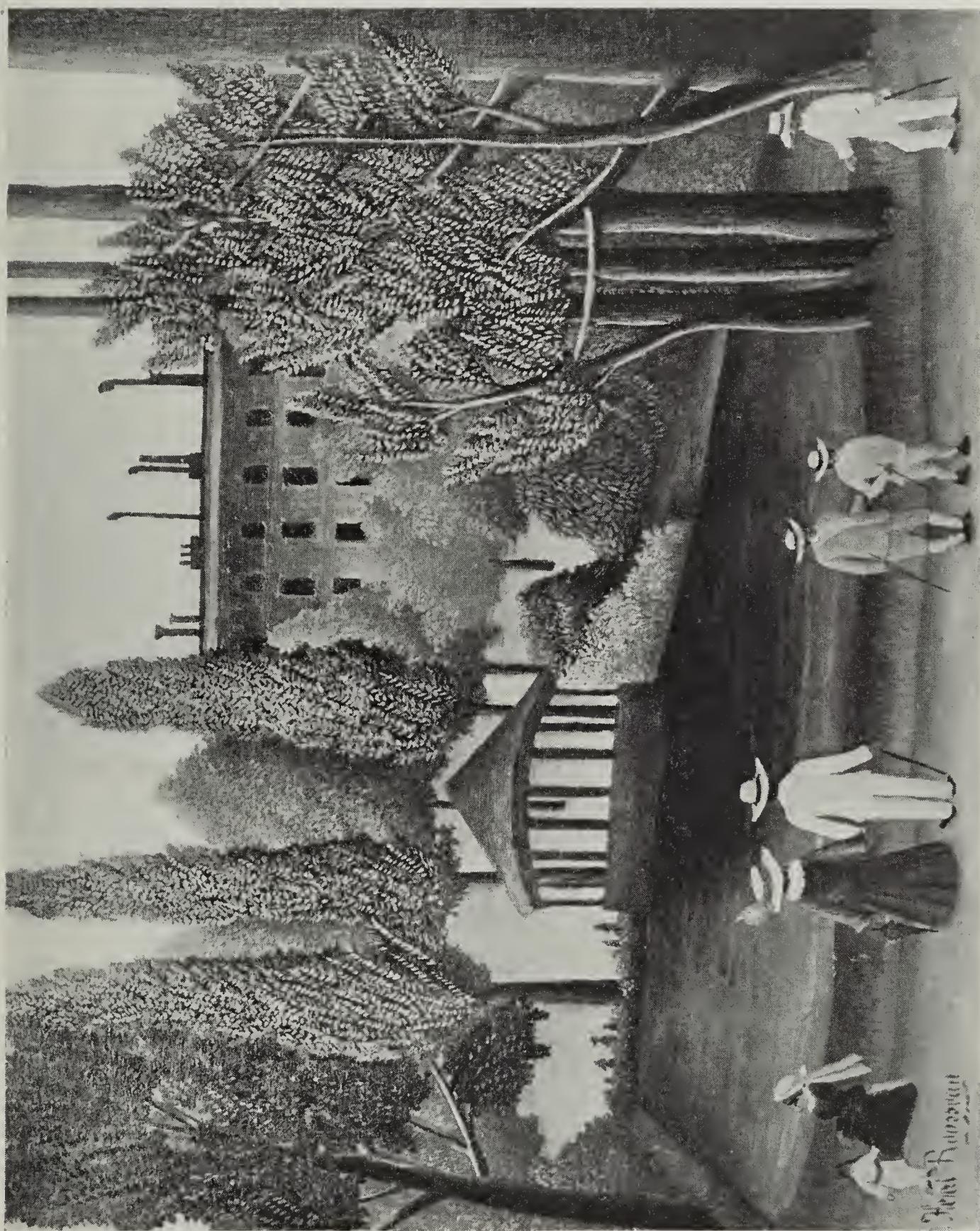
Negro art, in exhibiting a form which is in the fullest sense sculptural, has enforced a sharper distinction between the possibilities inherent in painting and sculpture, respectively, and it has also put at the disposal of painting a new source of inspiration. It is not a confusion of values that a painter should find inspiration in another art: the confusion arises when he directly imitates the methods of that art. Leonardo's solid forms are such an imitation, but the use of negro *motifs* in the work of Matisse, Modigliani or Soutine is not. The latter do not attempt to realize the three-dimensional qualities of negro statues: what is taken over is rendered in the terms proper to painting, and so



Chirico

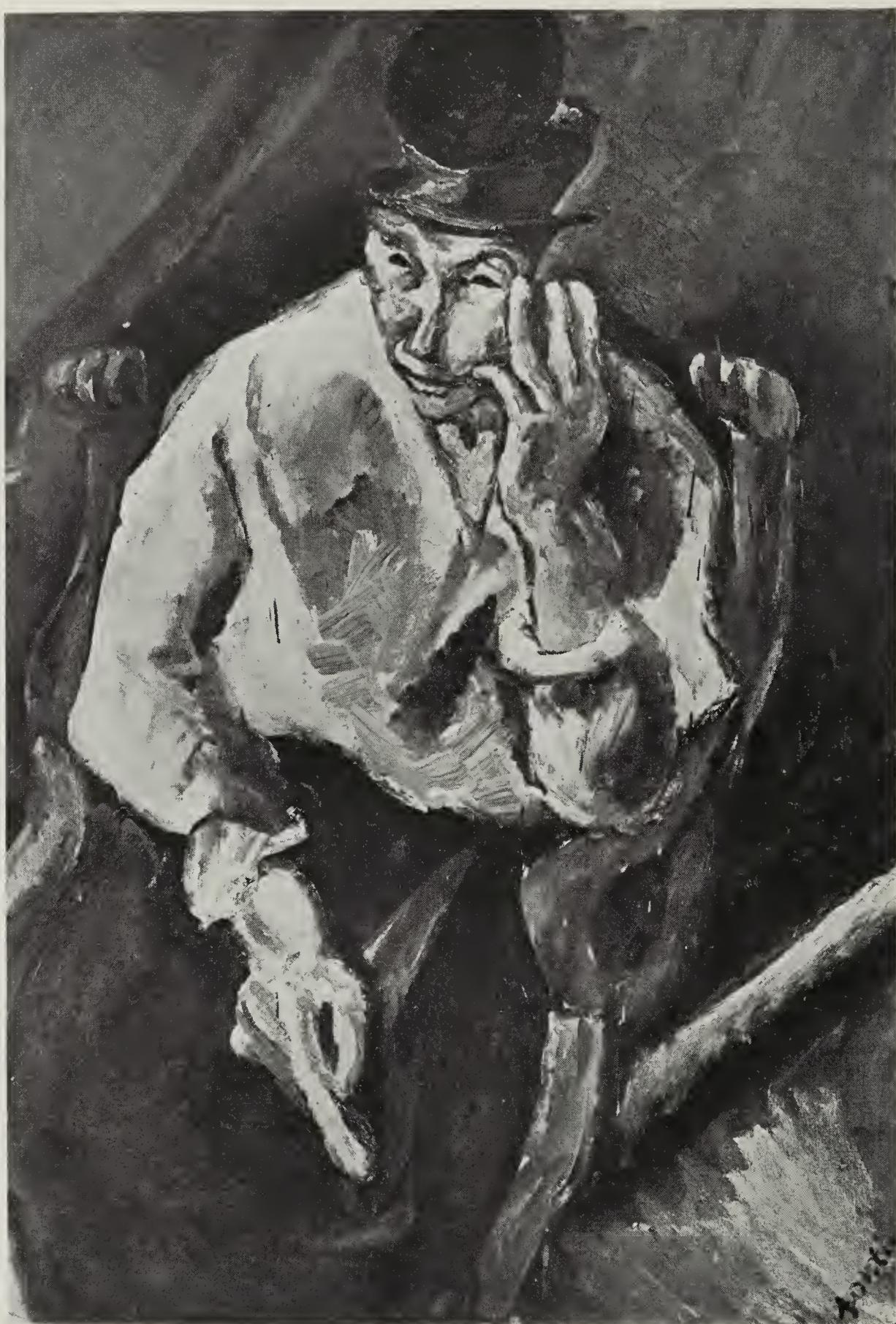
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Rousseau



Soutine

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(Reprinted from *The Art in Painting* by Albert C. Barnes.)

has nothing of the mongrel quality which is to be found in the contemporary revivals of Renaissance art. Matisse, Soutine and Modigliani render the essential feeling, the spirit of negro art and give it force in a new setting. The result is a very moving plastic form of which nothing in the previous history of painting is an anticipation.

In 1904 a group of Cézanne's followers established in Paris the *Salon d'Automne* and stimulated a public interest which has relegated academic painting to an insignificant place in cultivated French life. A second and more liberal salon, the *Indépendents*, which was started a few years later, showed other important influences besides those of Cézanne. A third, the *Salon des Tuileries*, still more comprehensive in its influences, had its first successful exhibition in 1924. These three salons have determined all that is vital and important in contemporary painting throughout the world.

What interested the insurgents of twenty years ago was Cézanne's development of a form that had freed itself to an unheard-of extent from the representative values of subject-matter. The foundation of his form was the impressionists' practice of using color regardless of the natural tones of the objects portrayed: color combined with light was distributed all over the canvas so that a homogeneous color-mass replaced the old-fashioned representation of foreground, middle-distance and background. The method resulted in relatively flat painting and made color function in tying the compositional units together into an organic whole. It achieved, by a different method, an approach to the color-power which only a few great artists of the past, the Venetians, Rubens, Poussin, Delacroix, had possessed.

Cézanne's treatment of subject-matter led some of his followers to believe that painting could be purified and refined into abstract forms by abolishing all representation of natural objects. Picasso went to the extreme of conceiving objects as a series of planes and he painted these planes so that only sections of objects were visible in angular and cubic shapes. The practice spread rapidly and was defended by a system of absurd psychological and metaphysical doctrines that impressed unreflecting painters and critics. A clever London newspaper-writer, Mr. Clive Bell, surrounded the cubists' doctrine with a quasi-scientific set of high-sounding but meaningless statements in a book that served its propagandic purpose in good journalistic fashion. Mr. Bell's successful *coup* in thus giving currency to

counterfeit thinking and counterfeit art was a circus performance which the late P. T. Barnum would have respected.

Sufficient time has passed to view cubism in retrospect and to evaluate it as an art-form and as an influence. Picasso and Braque put considerable aesthetic power into cubistic paintings, but it is doubtful if that power is not due to something independent of both the principles and the technique. The idea of abstract form divorced from a clue, however vague, of its representative equivalent in the real world, is sheer nonsense. In cubistic paintings that move us aesthetically there are always sufficient representative indications, as well as reliance upon other and traditional resources of painting, to stir up something familiar in our mass of funded experience. In these cases, the cubist technique functions psychologically precisely as do the distortions of El Greco, Renoir and Cézanne; that is, the representative element in all of those distortions contributes to the total effect. The nearest a purely cubist painting ever gets to the aesthetic forms that make up a complete painting, is good composition and novel color-forms, and those elements are never sufficient to constitute a satisfactory painting. The very great majority of cubistic paintings have no more aesthetic significance than the pleasing pattern in an Oriental rug.

A more important and constructive influence that came from the insurgent group in France is that of Matisse. He was never tempted to seek the metaphysical abstract that led Picasso out of the paths of the great traditions of painting. Matisse, like Cézanne, has always been interested in the real world as the source of a plastic instrument that would enable him to recombine selected aspects or phases of human experience into a form which was something new, a thing in itself, with its own independent existence. He began with using certain technical devices, which Cézanne invented, and he carried them to further extremes in making them constructive factors in a new design. Subject-matter was minimized: it was merely the foundation stone upon which to build lines of extraordinary plastic power, and color of unusual compositional significance. In other words, Matisse followed Renoir's and Cézanne's practice in creating plastic forms of structural integrity. Where Picasso abstracted an element in a situation, Matisse dealt with the whole situation as it exists in reality. The error in Picasso's cubistic excursions is that he ignores the fundamental psychological fact that *continuity* is the essential feature of perception. It is as absurd to say that planes or sections of cubes represent the reality of objects as—to quote an observation of William James—to con-

tend that our perception of a river is of spoonfuls or bucketfuls of water. In short, Picasso dealt with irrational abstractions that led him into a *cul de sac*, while Matisse dealt with concrete realities that expand continually into unlimited fields.

The tendency in present-day painting is away from the abstract and toward the utilization of situations of every-day life as a means of individual expression of universal human values. The impressionism of Claude Monet is scarcely in evidence, but the influences of Renoir, Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Matisse, all of whom had their origins in impressionism, are almost universal in one or more of their phases. To these influences have been added the decorations and distortions found in the arts of India and Persia, and especially in negro sculpture. Certain practices of cubism, for example, the interpenetration and accentuation of planes, have been generalized in the new manner of emphasizing spatial relations of naturalistic objects in the composition. The primitive element which Rousseau le Douanier adapted to new ends is also apparent in the work of some of the contemporaries. These various influences have determined the exotic, the distorted, the primitive effects which have stirred the wrath of our fetish-worshiping academicians. What they have urged against contemporary paintings is duplicated in every essential point in what their prototypes of 1875 published about many paintings now considered to be among the best in the Louvre.

The canvases of the contemporary painters are filled with units actively constructive in the general design, and all the plastic elements are distorted for obviously specific purposes. The fresh and bright colors which cubism tabooed are almost universal, though there is little or no literal rendering of the natural colors of objects. Color, distributed all over the canvas, composes the painting; it replaces foreground, middle-distance and background with a homogeneous color-mass that makes perspective itself chiefly color. The general tendency is to sacrifice everything toward the achievement of design. Decoration is rampant and so are obvious human values, as is inevitable when painting is expressive and when its subject-matter is the objects and events of the real world. Nothing of the importance or significance of Renoir or Cézanne has appeared, although several men have shown a form in process of development that may reach the importance and strength of the best of Picasso and Matisse.

## Mysticism and Art.

BY LAURENCE BUERMEYER.

MYSTICISM means, psychologically, a sense of profound and moving identification with something not ourselves. It means also that the identity felt is not demonstrable, in the sense that a man's legal nationality is demonstrable, or his membership in a club or other organization. In mystical states of mind, in other words, we are conscious of an expansion of our personality through union with something not ourselves, but this union is felt and not seen. The mystic feels that the dissolution of the boundaries which ordinarily separate him from the world is not merely fanciful or illusory, but represents a truth deeper than the facts which meet the eye. If, however, he is challenged to exhibit evidence for his conviction, he cannot do so. His feeling is not a conclusion drawn from verifiable premises, and it can never be made an intelligible or moving reality to the non-mystic.

The fact that the validity of mystical states is not demonstrable logically is what William James means by calling such states "ineffable." But this is not a fact characteristic of mysticism only. "No one," James writes, "can make clear to one who has never had a certain feeling, in what the worth or quality of it consists. One must have musical ears to know the value of a symphony; one must have been in love one's self to understand the lover's frame of mind. Lacking the heart or the ear, we cannot interpret the musician or the lover justly, and we are even likely to consider them weakminded or absurd. The mystic finds that most of us accord to his experiences an equally incompetent treatment."

Mysticism is thus no isolated phenomenon. It is only a high degree of something which enters into all our experiences, so far as they are concerned with ultimate values. All these are incommunicable to anyone of radically different temperament. We may illustrate its nature, first, by contrasting it with its opposite; second, by indicating some of the types of experience which are tinged with mysticism, but are not mystical in the fullest sense.

The complete antithesis of mysticism is the sense of isolation, of solitude in an alien and uncomprehending world. A world in which there is nothing, human or nonhuman, to answer and

coöperate with our powers, to take cognizance of our feelings, is what we find most difficult to endure. All our instincts look to help, of some sort, from our environment. The child's cry of pain or anger, which depends upon parental solicitude for its efficacy, is only the most obvious instance of this. In our more mature years, when we no longer expect to have our wishes granted as by a miracle, but take thought about means as well as about ends, we only make the miracle one step more remote. We offer inducements to others to do as we wish, but there would be no inducements to offer if others were not in some degree responsive to our acts. When either human beings or natural objects behave in a way we do not foresee and cannot control, when they disappoint our expectations, we are frustrated, at a loss: it is then that the sense of ourselves as limited, impotent and alone, is brought home to us with painful force.

It is obvious that the sense of union is always a relative matter. Since it is pain, grief, any frustration of our desires by the independent course of events, which makes us feel alienated from our world, the sense of union depends upon accord between ourselves and our environment. Some coöperation from the world we must have if we are to live at all. But so long as this coöperation is secured only by deliberate forethought and execution of plans, people or things may not seem hostile or intractable, but they give us no actual sense of identification. Expansion of the self, in the mystical sense, occurs only when we divine an actual sympathy, when our wills are answered by an immediate, unpurchased responsiveness. The difference is that between dealing with a stranger, who must receive a *quid pro quo* for everything he does, and a friend, who is directly moved by perception of our wants to try to gratify them. Whenever what we desire is immediately presented to us, without any need of driving a bargain or paying a price, the resulting sense of harmony is an approach to the mystical experience.

Of course, the mixture of responsiveness and indifference in things which we ordinarily encounter is not provocative of any intense mystical feelings. Patriotism at its height, however, in which we are overwhelmingly impressed by the unity in thought, feeling and purpose between our fellow-countrymen and ourselves, is a genuinely mystical feeling. For the patriot, as for every other human being, the union is incomplete, differences remain; but the differences with the foreigner are so much greater that the former sink into insignificance. So also with the man in love. The extent to which another individual meets and satisfies his desires, his imagination, makes the inevitable residuary

discords too trivial to hold his attention: the sense of union, temporarily at least, abolishes the sense of otherness, and mystical expansion is realized.

Unfortunately, this mystical expansion is often illusory. It is only too well known that love constantly attributes to its object virtues which do not exist, and that there are visions—for example, those of the drug-addict—which are merely visionary. “The sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its ability to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature, usually crushed to earth by the cold facts and dry criticisms of the sober hour. Sobriety diminishes, discriminates and says no; drunkenness expands, unites and says yes. It is in fact the great exciter of the Yes-function in man. It brings its votary from the chill periphery of things to the radiant core. It makes him for the moment one with truth. Not through mere perversity do men run after it. To the poor and unlettered it stands in the place of symphony-concerts and literature; and it is a part of the deeper mystery and tragedy of life that whiffs and gleams of something which we immediately recognize as excellent should be vouchsafed to so many of us only in the fleeting earlier phases of what in its totality is so degrading a poisoning. The drunken consciousness is one bit of the mystical consciousness.”\* The frequent tendency of mystical states of mind to sink into merely illusion and emotionalism makes it necessary, therefore, in considering the relation of art to mysticism, to consider also the false aesthetic mysticism which corresponds to the patriotism which is jingoism, the love which is infatuation, the religion which is superstition.

The first and most obvious affinity between art and mysticism arises from the fact that art provides us with a world which is made by human beings for the direct satisfaction of their desires. This is true also of the material apparatus of life; but art, unlike the things which minister to our physical necessities, appeals immediately to personality. The artist puts his whole self into his work, as the engineer or manufacturer does not. The world he presents us with is a more humanized world than that of the man of business or the industrialist. Art without personality is nothing, but in the sphere of the merely useful personality is a vanishing fringe around the borders of the mechanical.

Art, in other words, directly enlarges our vision by showing us the vision of our fellows, and in this sense it necessarily and always has some of the essential quality of mysticism. In a

\* James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 387.

less specific manner, also, it contributes to the outgoing of the self into the world, by suggesting that the frustration of our desires by things over which we have no control is not final and absolute. How far the things of the world are really alien and hostile is always a problem. That they may be in a measure controlled materially, science and technology have made clear, but the actual command over "this sorry scheme of things entire" which either individuals or the race can exert, is infinitesimal. Art, in showing a peculiar sort of responsiveness in matter, its capacity for assuming forms which immediately satisfy our human desires, provides a presumption if not a promise that the unexplored remainder of the world may not be wholly alien or indifferent to us. In this again it joins hands with the mystical experience.

This is true even of the art of a writer like Lytton Strachey, or of a painter like Degas, both of whom seem essentially detached and ironical. It is only, however, as we approach artists whose interpretation of the world as a whole is colored by personal feeling, who seek to make the totality of things a living reality, that we come to art which is in the fullest sense mystical. We have mysticism at its height, in other words, when the harmony between the self and the world, realized in ordinary life only now and then, is taken to be the key to all experience. Then what is hostile or indifferent is regarded as essentially illusory or transient, everything is felt to be full of life, and at heart akin to ourselves. Union with the world is not a casual or momentary episode but the ultimate truth of things, and the responsive spirit is everywhere. The artists who give us this sense of all-pervasive life are the mystics *par excellence*. Dante, Milton and, in a somewhat different sense, Goethe, are essentially mystics; Beethoven and Cesar Franck have more of the mystical quality than Mozart or Debussy, Giotto than Piero della Francesca, Rembrandt than Rubens.

In painting, the first and most obvious expansion of the self comes simply from the discovery of a wealth of relationships, harmonies and contrasts of color, linear rhythms, patterns of light and shadow, harmonious spatial intervals, which we find in real objects only occasionally, or in a comparatively degraded form. These relationships, once pointed out, often appear with the force of a revelation: the actual appearance of things—not of pictures only, but also of the things of nature—assumes a colorfulness, a richness, an arresting interest, which make the world seem transfigured. But although the eye, once opened, sees the beauty of line, of color, of far-reaching space, in a whole

world which was formerly drab and lifeless, it is in works of art that these qualities appear at their best. Always, or nearly always, in the realm of fact, the colors are imperfectly harmonious, the spaces are too empty or else they are overcrowded, the lines are in some degree stiff and awkward. The desire for a satisfying order in things, in other words, is thwarted as often as it is satisfied, and the mind seeking to be thoroughly at home in the world must either turn to art, or else so select, simplify and rearrange its perceptions that they become in effect creative and aesthetic.

Just so, in our dealings with persons, we constantly find that actual people fall short in complete expressiveness, mar as well as make the living drama in which they play their part, and for the adequate satisfaction of our imagination we must project into them a set of qualities, of passionate attitudes, which our actual perceptions do not fully warrant; that or else turn to the personalities presented to us in literature.

The highest range of mysticism, the vision of the world as a manifestation of indwelling life or spirit, is best illustrated by Giotto, El Greco, Rembrandt or Claude Lorrain. In Giotto, mediaevalism reaches the summit of its pictorial expression. The profoundly religious quality of his pictures is not due to their employment of Christian subject-matter. Such subject-matter appears *ad nauseam* in the tedious and insipid altar-pieces with which Catholic churches everywhere are filled. Upturned eyes, folded hands, a rapt and sanctified expression of face, only too often give the effect of mere sanctimoniousness, and the Biblical narratives which cover the walls of so many churches all over Europe are often no more mystical than the pictures in our own cinematograph theatres. It is the dignity, expressiveness and restraint of Giotto's line, the clear, luminous color in which his frescoes are bathed, the amplitude of his subtly indicated but convincing space, the whole effect of a transfigured but deeply real world, which make us feel that the universe as he saw it is really more exalted, more glorified, than that which our own unaided eyes can show us.

In El Greco we have not the Olympian calm of Giotto, but tortured sensibility, a perfervid, almost feverish imagination. Again, however, there is no reliance upon mere facial expression, upon literal imitation of terror, agony, transports. The ecstatic vision of El Greco appears in the use of the plastic means themselves, in the writhing serpentine line, the distorted figures, the iridescent, shimmering color, the eerie and ghastly light, the movement which flows through every area of the canvas. The

whole world appears to be in a turmoil, a turmoil animated by hopes and fears akin to those of human beings, but otherwordly, unearthly, transported.

These painters represent what may be called a supernatural mysticism. We find the mysticism of Nature, at least of romantic Nature, in Claude; of human beings, in Rembrandt. Nature, in Claude, is of course not the Nature of mechanical science or of material things in their individuality. What Claude shows is the majestic peace of the larger groupings of natural objects, of meadow, river, mountain and sea. This he renders largely through designs of space, in which the use of perspective and the arrangement of the masses give us an overwhelming effect of extensity, of infinity of distance. These vast spaces are filled with a glowing, colorful light, which makes them not merely indefinitely extended, but alive throughout the whole of their extension. From his pictures we get much the same effect that we do when, on a clear night, we not only see the stars but actually have some realization, however inadequate, of the magnitude of the stellar universe: the sense of a spaciousness by which our minds and feelings are carried outward forever further and further.

The mysticism of Rembrandt is different from any of these. It is the realization of personality, a making manifest of the unplumbed depths of human quality which lie all about us, but which we are ordinarily too dull to realize for ourselves. There is not in him, as there is in Goya or Degas, an actual portrayal of psychological states of mind; there is neither irony nor sentiment; the persons portrayed are perfectly natural, composed, even—superficially—prosaic; but we have the impression that their flesh is opaque no longer, that we see through it to the living human being of whom it is only the visible sign. This mystery of personality is conveyed by the use of chiaroscuro, the dramatic contrast between light and shadow, by which the effect of an illumination of what seemed commonplace is perfectly realized.

Another example, again quite distinctive in kind, is that of Cézanne. Cézanne, living after Manet and Monet, had an interest in the apparently commonplace which resembles Rembrandt's; but the life he depicts is that of things as well as of persons, and his means are color, much more than light. He had Manet's ability to see the essential, that which makes a thing what it is; but the things are far more solid and substantial, they have a more moving reality, than Manet's. This sense of solidity and substance in individual things is conjoined with a much greater command of space-composition than Manet's, so

that he gives us a sense of life in Nature which has much of the epic power of Claude, but is realistic rather than romantic. His mysticism becomes apparent the moment we compare his work with that of a not altogether dissimilar painter, Matisse, also a great artist, but one whose work is much more superficial, much less powerful, much nearer mere decoration.

We must now consider the work of painters who aimed at mystical effects but failed to achieve them. Such painting is on the way to the ineffable raptures of the alcoholic, the drug-addict, the sentimentalist. Or—to take the familiar examples—it corresponds to the illumination provided by the word "Mesopotamia," or by long-continued contemplation of the navel. Like all painting which descends from the plastic to the merely illustrative, it is characterized by reliance upon adventitious or conventional associations. We see an analogue to it in the patriotism which is merely flag-waving, or in the cheap fiction and balladry which rely on the stage-worn properties of romance—moonlit nights, weeping skies, sunsets over the sea. The painters who are spurious mystics, lacking the penetration of eye which can catch an independent view of the living world, and the command of means to set down such a view, copy, exaggerate and vulgarize the insight of others.

Mere subject-matter, as we have said with reference to Giotto, has nothing to do with the attainment of mystical effects. A Cézanne still-life communicates more of the quality of life, seems a profounder revelation, than a Madonna by Andrea del Sarto or Murillo. A painter such as Turner, however, relies almost solely upon the use of particular subject-matter. What is far away and long ago—for example, the scenes of classical mythology—what is strange and exotic, are utilized to replace any genuine perception of the true inwardness of things. In his "Wind, Rain and Speed," we see a train crossing a bridge in the midst of a storm, and near by a group of fairies dancing! This is on a par with the mysticism of ghost stories. Meanwhile, the technique, the actual use of plastic means, when it has any distinctive quality, is a superficial imitation of Claude's.

A similar counterfeit mysticism is that of Böcklin. His famous picture, "Die Toteninsel," might be an illustration for one of Edgar Allan Poe's tales. Of a fresh and personal perception of color, of light or of line, it shows none. It is not plastic art at all, but literature, and literature which is decidedly trite, melodramatic and specious. If this is mystical art, then so are the Doré illustrations to Dante's *Inferno*. The whole force of such painting is due to suggestions of things and events which

have nothing whatever to do with painting: it has all the unreality of an opium dream. To take it seriously as art is the same thing as to make the sign of the cross in order to ward off smallpox infection.

A final illustration of such mysticism is the work of the American painter, Arthur B. Davies. In his pictures we see dreamy-looking nymphs in strange landscapes, swirling movement and flying hair which suggest the wind sweeping over wide open spaces—all the paraphernalia of popular romantic mysticism. But, as with Turner and Böcklin, this striking subject-matter is not embodied in a personal or distinctive plastic expression. His means are simply the clichés of painting, notably of Botticelli, employed to give pictorial setting to commonplace literary images. His vivid rhythmic movement is chiefly linear and is supported by no original use of color or light or space. Plastically, his painting is that of a skilled eclectic. His superficial adaptation of other men's contributions yields an appeal obvious but cheap, and his mysticism is only a dreamy dalliance with fancies.

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The Barnes Foundation's course of lectures to the teachers of art in the Philadelphia public schools, conducted by Dr. Laurence Buermeyer, ended on the 30th of January. For his constant and hearty coöperation in making the course a success, the Barnes Foundation extends thanks to Mr. Theodore M. Dillaway, director of education in art in the Philadelphia schools.

# The Art Academies and Modern Education.

By THOMAS MUNRO.

FOR fifteen years the collection of modern pictures and sculpture now belonging to the Barnes Foundation has been besieged by students and teachers from art academies all over the country. Permission to view the collection was for a long time freely accorded them, but observation of their attempts to study the pictures revealed a disheartening dearth of either capacity to perceive the significant aspects of plastic art, or ability and inclination to attempt a systematic analysis of aesthetic principles. The discovery that understanding and intelligent method were lacking in the very quarters in which these things would naturally be looked for, was one of the reasons for the establishment of the Barnes Foundation as an institution prepared to give systematic training in the appreciation of art. Since the opening of the Foundation's gallery, and the inception of its active educational program, requests for admission from persons connected with academies have continued to arrive. The Foundation, desirous of coöperating with existing institutions as long as possible, began by granting the greater part of these requests.

The result of the experiment has been described at length in the January issue of this *Journal*. Extensive observation of the method of study, the comments, the general behavior of the visiting painters, has made it amply apparent that they have received no systematic training in the intelligent study of art. Except for a few individuals in whom natural endowment had not been entirely stifled by inept instruction, they proved themselves unable to discriminate plastic qualities and relationships; they lacked any conception of aesthetic principles in general, or of the application of such principles to particular works of art; they were unable to distinguish between reverence for prestige and recognition of positive accomplishment, emotional reverie and enjoyment of specific art values. Increasing experience has fortified the conviction that study of plastic art by people so little qualified to attempt it can lead only to futility.

At the same time, the multiplication of requests to visit the Foundation's gallery has given rise to a serious practical problem. The presence of large numbers of visitors of the sort described has been a distraction and an interruption of the educational work in the Foundation's own classes, and has necessitated a change

in the Foundation's policy. Several members of the faculty of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts had for months enjoyed the privilege of bringing their classes to our gallery; we have been obliged to withdraw this privilege, and to deny admission to the gallery also to the members of the Art Students' League of New York. The statement of our new policy is embodied in the following letter:

JANUARY 23, 1926.

ART STUDENTS' LEAGUE,  
New York City.

DEAR SIRS: We shall be obliged if you will inform your students that the Barnes Foundation is not a public gallery, but an educational institution which has its own courses and its own requirements for admission to those courses. We are compelled to ask you to make this announcement because for the past several months your students have appeared here in various numbers and asked for admission to our gallery while the building was occupied by our regular classes; this naturally led to serious disturbance of our work, which was still further complicated by the fact that your students practically always insisted upon being admitted.

If you as an institution are interested in coöoperating with us to the extent of having one or more classes study regularly at our gallery, that could be arranged providing your students would be willing to pursue systematic study as outlined in our various books, etc.

No reply to this letter was received, nor to similar suggestions made to the faculty of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

As is apparent from the second paragraph of this letter, we are reluctant to close the door to any coöperation that promises valuable results. The conditions under which such coöperation is possible, however, are not easy of attainment. The inadequate preparation of nearly all the candidates for admission who come from the art academies constitutes the chief stumbling-block, and its removal involves consideration of the methods of instruction in art which are almost universally employed. We can only make our general policy clear by pointing out what we regard as the deficiencies and positive errors in such instruction.

The general case against art teaching in the academies has long been familiar, but in order to relate effects to causes we may summarize the chief points in it. The large art schools, directed by officials drawn from conservative financial, social and intellectual circles, have always opposed radical innovation or departure from accepted standards. Invariably they have opposed the living art of the day, until it has won recognition in spite of them, and then they have employed it as a new orthodoxy, an additional weapon against any later fresh and spontaneous aesthetic expression. Such was their attitude towards Courbet,

towards the impressionists, towards Cézanne; such is their present attitude towards the successors of these artists. The frame of mind cultivated by them, the habits of perception, thought and action which they instil, have always been and still are timid, imitative, intolerant. So universal and inveterate has been their policy of imitation and repression that the word "academic" has become a synonym for all that is opposed to creative originality.

This disposition on the part of academic authorities is the more formidable because, by their control of prizes, fellowships and the hanging of pictures at exhibitions, they have means of bringing considerable pressure to bear upon students. Conformity is the price which many a pupil has to pay for the opportunity to continue his study of art, or to market his pictures when he has painted them. It is not only by such material rewards, however, that pressure is brought to bear; the constant approval of whatever is second-hand, disapproval and ridicule of what is original, is an unceasing influence working towards the commonplace. Finally, academic standards, which conform closely to the popular tastes of the day, do point the way to a successful financial career. With minor exceptions, the painters whose pictures bring high prices from magazines, advertisement agencies, and the uninformed public, are the characteristic product of the academies. To provide the necessary training for a commercial career, of course, is not discreditable. There is even a kind of educational service performed when the lower levels of popular taste are elevated through the dilution of what authentic artists have produced. But neither earning a living nor enlightening the extremely benighted is the same thing as creating art, and it is the sin of the academies that they have sought to confuse things so utterly different. The result of the confusion is that the aesthetic impulse is corrupted at the source, and many persons potentially capable of some genuine creation in art are perverted into mere tradesmen in paint.

This is the familiar indictment of the academies. Its essential truth is proved by the actual results of academic training. In more than a century of operation (the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts was founded in 1806) the American art schools have turned out many competent technicians but less than half a dozen graduates who have won lasting recognition, here or abroad, as creative artists. Complacent patriotism, sentimentalism and political influence have awarded medals and commissions profusely, but significant achievement has been almost entirely the work of men independently trained. This has been

the rule also in Europe, where the Ecole des Beaux Arts has a record of futility comparable to that of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Chicago Art Institute, or the Art Students' League of New York. It is true that many genuine artists of the present day, such as Glackens and Prendergast in America, Picasso and Matisse abroad, did attend an academy for a year or two, mainly for the purpose of having a model and a place to paint among companions. But to the instruction they paid little attention then and little respect afterwards; they quickly disregarded what they had been told, and worked out their modes of expression alone or among independent groups of fellow-workmen. The academic exhibitions tell the same tale. After all due allowance is made for the students who fail because of lack of native ability, the dreary uniformity of the pictures hung is a depressing revelation of aesthetic poverty. No better evidence is needed of the subjection of individuality to sterile formulas.

The cause of this poverty and sterility is to be found in the assumption which underlies substantially all academic teaching and practice. The assumption is that technique, and personal, individual expression, are two independent things, that the student can be trained in technique and then left free to express himself in any style he may choose. Nothing could be falser than such a view. Of course, "technique" may mean the bare handling of the medium—mixing pigments on the palette, applying them to canvas, varnishing, care of brushes, etc.—but this is not significant technique, and only the briefest instruction in it is needed. Technique, in the sense that Manet's technique differs from Ingres's, or Rembrandt's from Velasquez's, is a part of the painter's style itself: it reflects his whole manner of seeing his subject; and this is the essence of his art. "The style is the man himself" is one of the most time-honored of aesthetic axioms. To inculcate a particular technique is to fix a habit of perception; when this is done, the individual is already an echo of somebody else, and the academic fetters are firmly fastened.

For example, the accepted practice for beginners is to start with drawing from antique sculptural casts. The purpose of this is to acquire "a sound training in the fundamentals of draughtsmanship;" in other words, skill in copying the linear contours of an object, and the lighted and shaded surfaces which indicate its solidity. In this procedure, the student receives an initial impetus towards imitation of a model, towards seeing and picturing an object in terms of line and solidity with color

as an after-thought, and finally, towards conceiving of beauty in line, surface, drapery, posture and sculptural design according to Greek (usually late Greek and Roman) conventions. These habits and the skill involved are by no means fundamental to all plastic art, but only to some of the less original artists of the Italian Renaissance and its later outgrowths; hardly even to the Venetians, who conceived both contour and solidity not primarily in terms of sculpture but of color and atmosphere. It is assumed, in spite of individual variability, that this Greek-Florentine style will be best suited to every student, and his necessary starting-point. Of course, a particular student may find this style congenial to him, but it is taught, not as something which *may* meet an individual's taste, but as a standard, a rule of rightness, an objectively valid law to which all *ought* to conform.

Even in the academies which profess to leave the student free to accept or reject the technique commended to his attention, the essential damage remains. To imitate Raphael's drawing is to form the habit of seeing like Raphael: once the habit is formed, the student is no longer at liberty to take it or leave it. Some following of models, some assimilation of traditions, there must necessarily be. But freedom depends upon the multiplicity of models, of traditions. An understanding of draughtsmanship is not gained by following any one method of drawing, but by learning to draw in various ways—like Titian, like Rembrandt, like Velasquez, as well as like Leonardo. Those who have made fruitful use of a tradition have always been those who have known other traditions also. The result of making the classical type of line the only standard is to leave the student ignorant of what such line can really do, to debar him from varying it and adapting it intelligently. A formula repeated parrot-wise is not genuinely understood at all. The principle is the same as that by which we say that a man who knows only Renaissance art, or only modern art, does not really know either. To understand each, he must see it in relation: Renaissance art as containing the germ and promise of modern art, modern art as the outgrowth of what was vital and significant in Renaissance art.

In brief, the essential truth which academic instruction ignores or neglects is that learning to do is inseparably connected with learning to see. To follow any fixed and standardized method of doing means failure in learning to see: it is merely the acquisition of a bad habit. Any habit whatever has a tendency to grow fixed and bar the way to future progress, but the fixation becomes almost insuperable when the student is told that he is learning, not, for example, Bouguereau's style of drawing and

modelling, or Corot's color-scheme, but simply "Figure-Painting" or "Landscape." Whatever habits of perception his instructor may have acquired are thus riveted upon him, and only too frequently his vision is permanently narrowed and crippled.

The academic method of teaching anatomy and perspective illustrates the same inflexibility, the same ignorance of aesthetic principles. In these subjects, the student learns a host of details about natural facts, laws, and appearances. These are given him not as suggestive images to be freely transformed in design, but as necessary ways of representing an object. Of course, such knowledge is not necessarily useless: it may provide the artist with themes for design, and his design may even call in certain respects for fidelity to natural appearances. But to make the knowledge fundamental, and above all to treat it as authoritative, is to revert to the most ancient of aesthetic fallacies—that art is imitation.

The same imitative bias appears in courses in "Composition" or "Decoration." So far as the names go, such courses might be broad experimental surveys of the possible ways of altering appearances in the interest of better spacing, coloring, etc. The common practice, however, is to present only a few standard styles of composition and design, and to lay these down as setting a fashion to be followed by all. In view of the extreme variety and flexibility of the best classic and contemporary composition, the academic course is no more fundamental to painting than a thorough training in the heroic couplet would be to a poet about to venture into modern verse-forms. If a fair assortment of compositional designs were taught, if interested students could study some of the less popularly known traditions, both primitive and exotic, the academy could claim with justice that it was offering something of likely value to the artist. The courses would be still more genuinely fundamental if in these historical forms, common principles of design were pointed out, such as rhythm, variation and contrast of motives, and integration of plastic means.

It is not too much to say that in the entire curriculum of the academies there is nothing which is necessarily fundamental for an artist. The explanation for this fact is to be found partly in the character of the typical academy's collection of original works of art. With the single exception of the Chicago Art Institute, there is no American school of art which has a collection not notoriously inferior in quality and limited in range. Even the city collections, such as the Wilstach in Philadelphia, have mostly been filled under the advice of academy heads and

from the legacies of respectable old families, with doubtful old masters and feeble attempts by genteel academicians of the past. Since it is by looking at what others have to show that we learn to see with our own eyes, the absence of paintings by the great masters of the past and present makes education in art almost impossible.

An even more important cause of the prevailing futility is probably the character of academic personnel. The academic faculties contain many capable craftsmen, but they are practically devoid of distinctive and imaginative artists. This alone is enough to mark off the schools of art from almost every other type of educational institution in America. The atmosphere in them is repellent to men of independent mind, but is congenial to the commercial painter, the pedant, and the sentimental aesthete. All of these are, in general intellectual equipment, far inferior to the average teacher in a college, scientific or professional school. It is true that as a concession to liberalism some academies have admitted painters of modernist tendency to their staffs, but unfortunately such men have frequently been as ignorant of the painting of the past as their colleagues are of the painting of the present, and no less lacking in general culture. The result has been that their students turn out imitations of Picasso which have as little intrinsic value as the more usual imitations of Monet.

Not only are the teachers in art academies lacking in all except a strictly craftsman's knowledge of art, but they have little general culture and practically no training as educators. An independent artist, undoubtedly, may not require such training. But a good teacher of art should know something of teaching as well as of art, and be able to see his subject in some of its wider relationships. Since most academy instructors have neither college education nor its equivalent in general reading, it goes without saying that practically none are familiar with modern educational principles. The psychology of learning, the meaning of interest, experiment, reflective analysis, coöordination of studies with general development—all these conceptions as applied to the problem of making growth in art intelligent and free—have not yet reached their attention. In consequence, while all the educational world is changing, the art academies remain places where narrow, overrated technical skill is taught without scientific method, psychological insight or liberal culture.

The foregoing diagnosis of the ills afflicting academic education in art points the way to the necessary remedial measures. Chief among these is the spread of education among the teachers them-

selves. So long as the composition of academy faculties remains as it is, no improvement is to be hoped for. So long, also, as the pictures exhibited to students are inferior examples of the Barbizon school, contemporary imitations of Manet and Monet, and nondescript rehashes of the Dutch, Spanish and late Renaissance traditions, no instruction, however good, can be of much avail.

The Barnes Foundation's policy has been, and will be, to remedy the latter deficiency by extending to properly trained students the use of its resources. The former difficulty it cannot remedy, without coöperation on the part of the academies themselves. Until the teachers in those academies are prepared to take the steps necessary to secure such an education as is required, if they are to give fruitful instruction to their students, neither they nor their students will be qualified to make intelligent use of the Foundation's resources. Meanwhile the Foundation is compelled to reserve the privilege of admission to its gallery to students in the courses conducted under its own auspices.

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“There is something between the gross specialized values of the practical man and the thin specialized values of the mere scholar. Both types have missed something; and if you add together the two sets of values, you do not obtain the missing elements. What is wanted is an appreciation of the infinite variety of vivid values achieved by an organism in its proper environment. When you understand all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, you may still miss the radiance of the sunset. There is no substitute for the direct perception of the concrete achievement of a thing in its actuality. We want concrete fact with a high light thrown on what is relevant to its preciousness.”

—A. N. WHITEHEAD, *Science and the Modern World*.

# Day-Dreaming in Art Education.

BY ALBERT C. BARNES.

DEFENDERS of the present inequitable organization of society maintain that the superior quality of the services performed by members of the leisure class justify the exemption of a whole group of people from productive labor. The argument offered is, first, that the scientific and aesthetic life of the race, the maintenance of standards and ideals, the initiative to all progress, depend upon the richer experience which is open to people who need not take thought about the physical necessities of life; and, second, that those who labor with their hands have rarely produced art or science, or been sufficiently interested in either to provide a living for the artist or scientist. Hence, it is concluded, the more pregnant and enlightened experience is that of the leisure class; while the laborer's life is comparatively mechanical, shallow, unintelligent, and his pleasures are more nearly akin to those of the animal.

However, if we consider some of the implications of "experience," "intelligence" and "enlightenment," as these terms are defined by modern psychology, we can see how immunity from physical toil may be a liability as well as an asset, by depriving its beneficiaries of the very thing necessary to make "experience," in the proper sense of the word, real; that is, we may judge how far the experience of a member of the leisure class is likely to be more intelligent, enlightened, "richer," than that of a bricklayer or carpenter.

"Intelligence" is properly regarded as bound up with thinking or reflection; but "thought" is not identical with the process of entertaining ideas, forming theories, weaving a mental fabric. The phantasies of the day-dreamer and the delusions of the paranoiac are also ideas, theories, mental fabrics, into which some actual observations are often elaborated into plausible fictions with extraordinary ingenuity. For this reason, modern conceptions of scientific method refuse to admit either cleverness, ingenuity, or the presence of articulated systems of ideas, as constituting thought in the proper sense of the word. A distinguished thinker has written that the picture of the world given by Dante is as self-consistent, as coherent, as that given by the science of today, and much more congenial to natural human preferences. The trouble with it is that it cannot be verified by experience. In other words, genuinely reflective thought is that which, when put to the test of action, yields results that confirm it. The human mind when allowed to drift unchecked constantly shows

a tendency to get away altogether from the solid earth of facts, to build castles in the clouds—to dream dreams. It must be periodically brought back to earth by the brute force of events, and compelled to face a reality unsoftened by illusions. Any alleged "experience," therefore, which does not take account of the harsh and intractable but salutary impact of unadorned realities is not more enlightened but only more deluded, not richer but poorer thereby.

Ideals are possible consequences of actual events to which our own actions may make a difference, but they are always potential consequences of what *is*, and unless we clearly grasp what *is*, our ideals will be merely utopian. It is thus nonsense to suppose that one part of society can take charge of the facts, the moving forces of life, and another look after its ideals. Unless the ideals are practicable ideals, they are moonshine. The "idealist" who cannot vindicate his claim to the rôle of prophet and lawgiver by demonstrating his ability to set events moving in the desired direction, stands not above but below the despised artisan, because Nature itself so quickly declares the success or failure of the artisan's experiments, that he cannot afford to lose his grip upon realities.

In practice, the idealism which is merely day-dreaming takes the form of disparaging what *is* in favor of what *was* or what merely *might* be, without offering any definite guidance in the process of transformation. Recognition of this fact furnishes what justification there is in the demand for "constructive" criticism. To point to an ideal, without offering any positive suggestions about means of attaining it, is the very essence of day-dreaming; when to this is added impatience with the only approximations to the ideal which are at present available, the day-dreaming becomes not only idle but petulant and pernicious.

Evidence of the precious occupation of the ivory tower is nowhere more clearly presented than in Mr. Leo Stein's recent review, in the *New Republic*, of *The Art in Painting*. He commends that part of the book that deals with the objective, plastic qualities of paintings themselves, but objects to the parts that relate to educational principles. The facts that those educational principles embody the teachings and practices of acknowledged leaders, and that Mr. Stein has had no experience in educational practice, do not mitigate the assurance with which he promulgates the *ipse dixits* of his dream world. His ideal system of aesthetics is to be one from which the personal factor is to be rigidly excluded. He says it is permissible to point out the use made by a painter of color, light, line, space, but not to say that such use is good or bad. He asserts that statements

of the former sort belong to science, and have general validity; statements of the latter sort, he writes, reveal something not about the picture, but only about the person who is looking at it. The critic who aspires to be scientific must determine precisely how much of his reaction is a real discrimination of objective factors, how much of it is merely his individual preferences; in so far as he mixes the two, his ostensibly objective judgments have no validity.

The sublime aloofness which Mr. Stein requires is not a *sine qua non* of critical acumen, but a psychological impossibility. Any pretension that the critic has achieved it is merely a cloak for imposing preferences without avowing them or subjecting them to the give-and-take of contact with the preferences of others. If Mr. Stein attempts to point out the objective factors in a picture without passing any judgment of quality whatever, the success of his attempt can only result in a bald statement of facts, destitute of any aesthetic significance whatever. "Here is a patch of red, here a patch of blue;" this is a coldly impersonal statement about color, and its critical status is that of the information in a time-table or list of stock-quotations. "These colors are (or are not) harmonious, they are (or are not) structurally used, they aid (or do not aid) in composing the picture"—no such statements are admissible, on Mr. Stein's principles. They all contain an element of eulogy or disparagement, and so reflect personal preference. "This line is sensitive, terse, personally expressive," or "It is diffuse, wooden, imitative"—these judgments are equally tarred with the subjective stick. Mr. Stein's principles would compel him to state only the termini of the line, and perhaps analyze it mathematically. He might say that perspective was correct or incorrect, but never that space-composition was effective or ineffective. If this method were accepted, volumes might be devoted to the description of any picture ever painted, without the slightest approach to any criticism really critical. Merely to single out particular aspects for discussion is to betray subjective bias; it means that we consider those aspects important; but "important" is a subjective term, since nothing is important or unimportant apart from its effect on human sensibilities. William James long ago made it clear that all thought, however "scientific" and "impersonal" it may appear, occurs in the interest of personal desire, has a subjective bias, and is judged true or false according as it satisfies our whole nature, including our feelings. Mr. Stein, in other words, must either accept in principle the judgments of quality in *The Art in Painting*, or discard all its plastic analyses (which he commends) as vitiated by the same subjective bias.

What Mr. Stein has done is to set up an ideal of objectivity which is impossible of attainment, and then attack any attempt to approach the relative objectivity which *is* possible. He is like the skeptic who, because all thoughts may err, refuses to think at all. This is the essence of that withdrawal from reality with which modern psychology has made us familiar. What it indicates is not a highly sensitive intellectual conscience, but a dread of accepting the responsibilities of action. Evidently he wishes to purge his mind of all subjective bias or preferences; but the mind that has done the purging must itself be purged; and so on world without end. Could exoticism be carried to further limits of absurdity?

Persons whose experience in educational practice give weight to opinion, state that the purpose of education is to distinguish between better and worse and that the student is ordinarily led to form his preferences through the impact upon him of the preference of others. Statement of a judgment of quality is not dogmatism if warning is given that method is one thing, specific application another, and this is definitely stated in the preface to the book in question.\* The important point which Mr. Stein never even considers is this: can errors arising from a subjective bias in the application of the method be corrected by application of the same method, in the hands of someone else, whose bias is different or opposed? If they can, then the method is scientific in character. Since the primary purpose of the book is to present a method, and the evaluations of particular painters and paintings are chiefly incidental and illustrative, it would seem that, in common fairness, Mr. Stein ought to have given some attention to this question.

The whole tenor of his criticism makes it clear that he has left out of account the present situation in education in art. It is well known that the vast majority of persons who profess an interest in art are dilettantes, sentimentalists and antiquarians. To all of them the idea that a picture possesses a specifically plastic quality, the recognition of which requires a particular type of insight that needs specific training, is unknown or abhorrent. They are prepared to amass information about the history of art, or to go into irrelevant raptures before a particu-

\* "It is not assumed that the conclusions reached with regard to particular paintings are the only ones compatible with the use of the method: any one of them is of course subject to revision. What is claimed is that the method gives results as objective as possible within any field of aesthetic experience, and that it reduces to a minimum the rôle of merely personal and arbitrary preference. Preference will always remain, but its existence is compatible with a much higher degree of objective judgment than at present obtains." From the Preface to *The Art in Painting*.

lar painting. They are either unprepared or very reluctant to make any serious effort to understand what makes a picture a work of plastic art, and they do not wish to admit that any such effort is necessary. *The Art in Painting* is an emphatic challenge to the sentimental as well as to the academic habit of mind; Mr. Stein's demands would leave the field entirely in possession of those who are really benighted. Education in art will be little more than a myth until the present situation is radically transformed. In objecting to the only possible method of transforming it, he shows how hopelessly remote he is from the practical realities which must be dealt with if the ideal is ever to be realized.

Mr. Stein's error is the aged one that mistakes the individuality which is meaningless impulse, for true freedom. His fear that a pupil will be corrupted or enchain'd if he encounters any judgments about the value of works of art is only one phase of the widely spread belief that an individual has or can have any personality apart from his interaction with other individuals. The essential point of Mr. Stein's criticism is that the important thing about a pupil's judgment is that his integrity should be assured; that it should not be an echo of some one else's judgments. Mr. Stein ignores the indisputable fact that integrity is menaced, not only by authority, but also by whim or caprice; it is safeguarded, not by isolating the individual, but by offering him a variety of conflicting judgments, between which he may choose. The judgments in *The Art in Painting* are offered not as finalities but as challenges, and that fact is repeatedly stated in its text. If anyone's individuality is so feeble that he is obliged to give assent to every debatable assertion, little is to be hoped for from him in any event.

Mr. Stein's criticism is thus a perfect example of the aesthetics of the ivory tower. It is the criticism of one who, with no conception of the problems to be met, insists on ideal solutions that emerge from confused dreams. The compensatory character of his "ideals," their function as justification for sterility, is only too evident. It is hot-house preciosity passing for distinction, and based on the delusion that whatever inhabits a rarefied atmosphere is therefore elevated. It shows that life, freed from responsibilities is not richer but more attenuated because it nourishes not thought but reverie. It is ineffectual practically, not because it is too fine for the real world, but because it is too feeble; its sterility is an indication of its inner emptiness. It explains why the book on aesthetics which, fifteen years ago, Mr. Stein announced as forthcoming, has never materialized.

# THE ART IN PAINTING

BY ALBERT C. BARNES.

*Octavo, 530 pages, 106 illustrations*

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